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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes a series of national forums on adult education and literacy sponsored by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The first part contains profiles of the four national forums in Seattle, Washington; St. Louis, Missouri; Charleston, South Carolina; and Newark, New Jersey. Each profile consists of brief descriptions of the following: a site visit to a local adult education program site; an informal meeting with a small group of state directors of adult education and administrators of local programs; and the public hearing, at which a total of 180 state administrators, local practitioners, students, public officials, volunteers, community leaders, and representatives from business, labor, and community organizations shared their views or submitted written testimony. The second part summarizes testimony presented during the four formal public hearings. The information is presented in a series of six broad topical areas, each concerned with the challenges of expanding the capacity and improving the quality of service provided by the adult education and literacy delivery system: coordination, program effectiveness, professional development, a diverse provider network, funding, and special needs populations. Whenever possible, the actual words of hearing participants have been used to provide clarity and focus to concerns expressed. At the end of each topical area, one or more recommendations are highlighted. Appendixes include lists of testifiers, testifiers by type of organization, federal hearing officials, and site visit contacts. (YLB)

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A SUMMARY REPORT: NATIONAL FORUMS ON THE ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEM

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy

AUGUST 1991

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INTRODUCTION

"Education is not just about making a living: it is also about making a life." That statement, contained in *AMERICA 2000: An Education Strategy*, captures the spirit embodied in the Adult Education Act (P.L.100-297). This year marks the 25th anniversary of that Act. Over the years, adult education has grown from a $29.2 million program serving 388,000 clients to a $200 million program serving 3.3 million adults. It remains the primary source of Federal funding for a wide variety of adult education programs that enable educationally and economically disadvantaged adult Americans to gain both a better living and a better life.

Although Federal dollars spent on adult education programs represent only approximately one percent of the total U.S. Department of Education budget, the mission of the adult education program is among the top priorities of the President and of the Secretary of Education. AMERICA 2000 calls for creation of a "nation of students." It envisions a population of adults who will regard lifelong learning as an opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to compete in a highly technological workplace, to create a family environment where learning is encouraged, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Over the 25-year history of the Adult Education Act, adult education has matured as a movement and as a profession. In the last decade, heightened public awareness of widespread deficiencies in basic skills among adults has fueled momentum to increase availability of quality instruction for adults. Several thousand organizations across the country are currently providing adult education and literacy services. These include local education agencies, community colleges, community-based organizations, literacy volunteer organizations, libraries, correctional institutions, businesses, and labor organizations.

The time has come to step back and assess the effectiveness of the delivery structure, evaluate the quality of its services and formulate a strategy for expansion and improvement. The demands of this decade, and the 21st century, will surely stretch the capability of the adult education system even further than it is today. Now is the time to evaluate, to prepare, and to act.

To this end, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), in January and February of 1991, sponsored a series of National Forums around the country to hear from a broad cross-section of those involved or interested in adult education. Formal public hearings were the major focus of the Forums in each geographical location. The Forums were held in Seattle, WA; St. Louis, MO; Charleston, SC; and Newark, NJ. In each city, Federal officials also met informally with a small group of State directors of adult education and administrators of local programs, and visited a local adult education program site.

At the public hearings, 180 State administrators, local practitioners, students, public officials, volunteers, community leaders and representatives from business, labor and community organizations shared their views, or submitted written testimony. Their testimony addressed a wide spectrum of specific issues as well as recommendations for Federal action. A special focus was placed on coordination of services among Federally-funded programs. A listing of testifiers is contained in Appendix A. A chart showing testifiers categorized by type of organization represented appears in Appendix B.

Presiding at each of the four hearings were Federal officials from the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services. Those officials are listed in Appendix C.

This report summarizes testimony received at the formal hearings, as well as major issues raised in the group meetings. As could be expected, differing points of view were expressed. This reflects not only the diversity among the types of providers of adult education and literacy services, but also the often divergent perspectives on how the delivery system should meet the needs of parents, workers, and other special populations.

But the participants spoke with a common voice when testifying about the importance of adult education and literacy programs. Similarly, all emphasized the need for Federal leadership in removing barriers to coordination among Federally-funded programs. Finally, all who came forward to testify spoke of the critical need for wider dissemination, by the Federal departments, of information on promising practices and successful models that could guide their program improvement and coordination efforts.

A review of the testimony makes clear that the issues and concerns identified by hearing participants centered around two common themes: the need to expand the capacity of the adult education and literacy delivery system to ensure that all adults in need of educational services have access to those services; and the need to improve the quality of services to ensure that adults who enroll in programs reach the goal of self-sufficiency and full participation in society. As a result, the information in this report is organized around a set of broad topical areas, or themes, that affect both the quality and scope of adult education and literacy programs. Not each specific concern or issue raised in the public hearings is identified. Rather, most are represented within the context of one or more of the topical areas discussed.

Many issues outlined in this report are now being or will soon be addressed at the Federal level through a number of Federal initiatives already under way. Foremost among these initiatives are the AMERICA 2000 strategy for a "nation of students," and the Institute for Literacy Research and Practice. Brief descriptions of these initiatives are contained in Appendix D, with contacts for further information.

The National Forums provided the U.S. Department of Education, as well as the other participating Federal agencies, with an invaluable opportunity to hear, in a direct and often very personal way, how education can enhance the quality of life for adults, how programs serving adults are currently operating to meet their needs, and how programs might be strengthened and expanded.

AMERICA 2000's vision of a "nation of students" has the potential to change forever the lives of real people. In the words of one former adult education student, Joan Crosby of Charleston, SC:

> ***"When I was twenty-six years old I had called up adult education because I was tired of being in nowhere jobs that don't have any promise, no promotions, no raises. I was literally trying to live on $3,000 a year and adult education gave me the chance I needed. I am now in college...and when I am through I plan on being a teacher for adult education. I don't know what else I can say. I am definitely for adult education. I think it's an excellent program. It gives people chances and opportunities that they normally would not have."***

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PROFILES OF NATIONAL FORUMS

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
JANUARY 28-29, 1991

SITE VISIT: SEATTLE INDIAN CENTER
SEATTLE, WA

The Seattle Indian Center is a community based organization founded in 1958, making it the oldest Indian social service agency in the city. The Center's mission is to promote the cultural, economic, and social stability of local native Americans. In 1990, it provided educational and social services to 38,712 Native Americans and non-Indians. It is in the vanguard of the current movement toward one-stop, full-service organizations offering, under one organizational roof, educational instruction, job counseling assistance, placement services in vocational training, transportation, child care, housing, and food service. During 1990-91, approximately 250 students will receive instruction in the adult education program. Students receive instruction in small group settings along with individualized instruction.

Joan Seamon, Director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy, responds to a question at the Charleston small group meeting.

GROUP MEETING: Twenty administrators from State agencies, community colleges, businesses, labor unions, and community-based organizations met with OVAE staff and other hearing panelists to discuss local concerns in the delivery of services under the Adult Education Act. Coordination with other basic skills programs and support service agencies was a major discussion topic. Coordination was seen as a means to reduce barriers, improve referrals, implement long-range planning, and integrate related programs and services. Other topics of discussion included: the need for improved staff training; the need to center program effectiveness measures around individual student goals; and the importance of community-based organizations in the delivery of services.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing was held on the campus of Seattle Central Community College, in downtown Seattle. The panel received testimony from more than 30 individuals representing adult education teachers, administrators and students, volunteers, local private industry councils, organized labor, business, State and local welfare agencies, the Washington State Governor's office, education associations, and special interest groups and associations.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
FEBRUARY 4-5, 1991

SITE VISIT: IBM ADULT EDUCATION LEARNING CENTER
ST. LOUIS, MO

The IBM Adult Education Learning Center is supported through a working partnership between IBM, Boatmen's Bancshares, Inc. and St. Louis Public Schools. The Center occupies some 5,000 square feet of space in the IBM office facility in downtown St. Louis. The program combines IBM computer-assisted instruction, professional teaching and volunteer tutoring. IBM employees serve as volunteer tutors. A professional adult education administrator provided by the St. Louis Public School adult education program serves as instructor and curriculum coordinator. The program had been in operation for only a few months and was serving 20 students. The students attend the Center for three four-hour sessions each week. Future plans call for the Center to be open five days a week and to serve a large number of adults living in the downtown St. Louis area.

GROUP MEETING: Fifteen administrators from State agencies, local adult programs, business and adult education associations met with OVAE staff. A few topics dominated the testimony: program accountability; the need for full-time staff; and coordination of Federally-funded education, job-training and social service programs. It was recommended that coordination could be improved if the Federal government would create common definitions, common data collection requirements, and common program outcomes. All agreed that practitioners and students should be involved in defining program effectiveness measures. There was also agreement on the importance of using standardized tests to measure academic skill gains. However, most participants were not satisfied with the tests currently available. Several testifiers recommended that the Department of Education invest in the research and development of appropriate assessment instruments. Meeting participants also expressed concern about the high turnover rate among part-time adult education teachers. They believe this lack of stability has a negative impact on program continuity and quality.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing was held at Boatmen's Plaza in downtown St. Louis. The panel heard testimony from 36 individuals representing adult edu-

cation practitioners, students, community leaders, public officials, business leaders, volunteer tutors, and representatives from community groups.

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 11-12, 1991

SITE VISIT: BROYHILL FURNITURE COMPANY WORKPLACE PROGRAM
SUMMERVILLE, SC

The Summerville facility is one of 19 operated by Broyhill, and the only one in South Carolina. The Summerville plant employs 175 people in cutting wooden frame parts for upholstered furniture (the furniture is assembled at other Broyhill locations).

At the time, 28 employees were enrolled in the on-site workplace literacy program. It has a learning lab containing six personal computers donated by the Apple Corporation. An Adult Basic Education teacher and an instructional aide work with employees two days a week. Instruction is scheduled to accommodate work shifts. The instructional program serves primarily employees with low to mid-level reading skills. Over the last three years, a total of 42 Broyhill employees have received literacy

(Above) Broyhill employee Deborah Via operates a dowel driving machine, which sets in place the wooden pegs that hold the furniture frames together. This Broyhill manufacturing plant was visited by Federal officials as part of the Charleston public forum.

(Below) Ms. Via receives some assistance from one of the on-site education instructors, Jean McCrary, Dorchester Council Adult Education. Looking on is another Broyhill employee, Terry Goodwine.

education at the worksite.

The Broyhill program is one of 12 workplace education programs conducted by the Dorchester County School District II. Providing literacy services to employed adults is a growing enterprise in Dorchester County as it is throughout South Carolina.

GROUP MEETING: Twenty-five persons, including State agency administrators, local program practitioners, students and literacy association members, met with OVAE staff and hearing panelists. A variety of issues and program improvement opportunities were identified and discussed. Topics included the importance and relevance of student assessment, opportunities for coordination with other adult-serving programs such as JTPA and JOBS, the growth of workforce education in South Carolina and the South, and program structure issues, such as the need for full-time instructors and local program funding allocation formulas.

Ronald Pugsley, Chief of the Program Services Branch, U.S. Department of Education Division of Adult Education and Literacy, makes a point at the Charleston small group meeting. To his left is Trisha Caulder, Florence County Adult Education Director, and to his right is Millie Bagnal, Lexington County Adult Education Director; Elaine Miller, Charleston County Literacy Coordinator; and Cherry Daniel, Dorchester County Adult Education Director.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing was held in Mark Clark Hall, The Citadel, Charleston, SC. Testimony was received from 21 people, representing a variety of State agencies, local adult education providers, students, literacy providers, and public officials.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY
FEBRUARY 19-20, 1991

SITE VISIT: BERNIE L. EDMONDSON COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER EAST ORANGE, NJ

The Center provides adult basic education, adult high school, GED services enriched by vocational course offerings, career training, and evening school for speakers of other languages. Approximately 20 percent of Essex County students receive services through the Center or the programs it sponsors at four neighborhood schools. The Center has one of the highest GED pass rates in the State. The Center receives support from a variety of Federal and State sources. An enrichment program in dramatic arts is a special feature.

The Mayor of East Orange, Cardell Cooper, participated in ceremonies held at the Bernie L. Edmonson Center in honor of the visiting Federal officials. The Mayor is shown here surrounded by students who were present that day.

GROUP MEETING: Twenty-two administrators of adult education and literacy programs, representing community colleges, local school districts, State education agencies, labor unions and community based organizations met with OVAE staff and hearing panelists to discuss issues and concerns. While coordination issues were discussed, performance standards emerged as the major topic of concern. Participants identified several key items to be considered in framing performance standards. They suggested that the Department spearhead development of a student profile that can be modified by geographic area or region, for use as a model in determining measures of program effectiveness and student progress. Participants also advocated creation of a national panel on assessment, supported by Federal funds, to develop or validate tests for adult learners and to establish performance standards.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing was held at the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company in Newark, NJ. More than 60 representatives of State education agencies, local school districts, community colleges, community based organizations, labor unions, industries, public officials, and students testified.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

A summary of testimony presented during the four formal public hearings on adult education and literacy follows. The information is presented in a series of six broad topical areas, each concerned with the challenges of expanding the capacity and improving the quality of service provided by the adult education and literacy delivery system. These themes are:

- **Coordination**
- **Program Effectiveness**
- **Professional Development**
- **A Diverse Provider Network**
- **Funding**
- **Special Needs Populations**

Whenever possible, the actual words of hearing participants have been used to provide clarity and focus to the concerns expressed. At the end of each topical area one or more recommendations are highlighted. The recommendations were those most frequently mentioned by hearing participants.

Federal Officials who presided at the Charleston hearing were, l. to r., Jack Will, the Secretary's Regional Representative; John T. MacDonald, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education; Joan Seamon, Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy; and Ray Uhalde, Administrator, Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Labor.

THEME #1: COORDINATION

The current focus on basic skills has resulted in an unprecedented number of Federal adult education and literacy initiatives. A recent study by the COSMOS Corporation, conducted under contract for the U.S. Department of Education, reported that in FY 1989, 77 Federal programs in eleven Federal agencies authorized or supported adult education services. The U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor were responsible for the majority (52) of these programs.

A major objective of the public hearings was to learn the extent to which adult education and literacy programs are being coordinated and integrated with other Federally-funded programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged adults. Hearing participants agreed that coordination and integration of services are essential to the efficient delivery of programs. Often under-funded and understaffed, adult education providers have relied heavily on their ability to form strong cooperative linkages with a variety of public agencies and community groups.

One example of strong and successful coordination is the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative. Shirley Thomas, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of the Mayor, New York City, is an active participant in the Initiative. She described the importance of cooperation from both a student and a program perspective:

> ***"It is important because it allows students the best choice of appropriate services and allows them to move between programs as their skill levels increase and their goals change; it allows provider agencies to specialize in certain areas that they do best, but still gives them and their students access to the full range of available services; it allows all parts of a delivery system to benefit from exemplary programs and services that are developed; and it allows us to plan together to fill gaps in existing services or to effectively implement new services."***

Although examples of successful coordination can be found, most participants felt that there is a tremendous need for system-wide and comprehensive effort in this area. Several participants expressed mounting frustration with the apparent absence of coordination among Federal departments that administer adult education and literacy initiatives. Others noted that even many successful coordination efforts are often transitory and are brought about by the personalities involved—not by Federal or State policy.

Many felt that the proliferation of Federal programs has too often resulted in a fragmented delivery system. Participants reported that increased Federal involvement in adult education and literacy has created a plethora of programs, funding streams, and administrative structures at the State and local levels. For example, in New Jersey there are 63 different basic skills and literacy programs administered through six different State agencies. Washington State reports at least 155 different organizations providing basic skills instruction, with seven State agencies providing funding and administrative oversight. Illinois has 33 different funding sources for basic skills and literacy programs.

In discussing the large number of Federal programs, one local program provider commented:

> ***"It just seems like each new Federal initiative has a different target population, different eligibility criteria, a unique set of data requirements, and some institutionally created outcomes that do not take into account the individual needs or goals of the adult student."***

Suzanne Griffin, State Director of Adult Education in Washington, reported on the problems of trying to integrate the State Legalization Impact Assistance Grant (SLIAG) program authorized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), into the adult education program:

> ***"[The] United States Department of Education did not play an active role in designing the delivery of educational programs for eligible legalized aliens (ELAs) even though ESL and citizenship classes for these adults were mandated by the Federal legislation. As a result, State education agencies struggled to design programs which met conflicting regulations between Health and Human Services and immigration education while responding to***

Testifying at the Seattle hearing were, from l. to r., Shirley Spencer, Adult Education Director for Idaho; Barbara Thompson, Adult Education Director for Alaska; Suzanne Griffin, Adult Education Director for Washington; and Eloise McLoud, former adult education student and currently a teacher's aide.

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clients' needs. Local education agencies served adult learners the best they could while regulations fluctuated over who could be served, what services were eligible for funding, what information had to be reported, and what the rate of reimbursement should be. We'll never know how many ELA's went unserved because the burdensome reporting process of the SLIAG program forced some local education agencies in this State to stop providing the classes."

Bob Bickerton, Adult Education Director in Massachusetts, made the following observation:

"The current 'patchwork quilt' approach to supporting Adult Basic Education services results in an unacceptable level of duplicative administrative tasks and the need to reconcile contradictory service criteria at the local provider level: e.g., a program may have to submit as many as seven or eight proposals to a variety of State and Federal agencies for overlapping services; submit performance reports with different criteria for the same characteristics—even simple instances like 'adults 16-18 years of age' for one report and '17-21' for another are needlessly costly and frustrating."

Participants had a number of recommendations on how to streamline the system. Several participants indicated that, to the extent possible, Federal agencies should agree on common definitions, data elements and some comparable program outcomes. This would greatly enhance coordination and integration of services for clients.

Testifying at the Newark hearing were, from l. to r., Surendra Singh, Dean of Lifelong Learning at Quinsganond Community College in Worcester, MA; Robert Bickerton, Adult Education Director for Massachusetts; and David Rosen, Newsome Associates.

Robert A. Guadagnino, Director, Division of Employment and Training, New Jersey Department of Labor, represented the thoughts of many when he said:

> ***"I would hope that one of the messages that comes from these hearings is a call to each of the Federal agencies involved, mainly Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services, to look more closely at how their regulations inhibit local efforts."***

Several participants recommended that the Federal agencies should provide monetary incentives for effective coordination. They felt that the Federal government could not successfully mandate coordination and cooperation, but suggested that specific and guaranteed incentives would bring about voluntary coordination at State and local levels. Others disagreed, suggesting that the Federal government not only could, but should mandate coordination. Michael Deisz, Executive Director of the Job Service of North Dakota:

> ***"I would strongly recommend that a requirement for joint planning and cooperation between Job Training Partnership Act, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills, and Adult Education be mandated. In order to maximize the total resources available, it is imperative that these programs integrate their delivery systems and collaborate on joint funding of projects to ensure sufficient resources to meet the needs of all individuals in need of these services."***

Many participants expressed strong feelings about the Federal role. Their recommendations ranged from mandating coordination of all Federal basic skills initiatives with the Adult Education Act to creation of a Federal basic skills/adult education and literacy block grant that would be administered through the Department of Education.

Some participants believed that only through a fundamental change in the way Federal funds flow to the State and then to local providers can significant improvement be made in coordination efforts. The Honorable Roy Blunt, Secretary of State in Missouri, suggested such a change:

> ***"...I would recommend that the Department of Education attempt to work with the White House to move all literacy support monies into a single block grant which would be given to one entity in the State. The time has come for Washington to step aside from trying to mandate how and who is served. There is no national solution to this national problem of illiteracy. Solutions will come State by State and community by community."***

The message was clear that the current approach to funding and administering adult education and literacy programs inhibits rather than supports the coordinated delivery of services. Many participants believed that the current funding approach has, in fact, created multiple delivery systems, none of which provides the comprehensive, long-term services needed to meet the challenge of improving the basic skills of millions of adults.

Finally, most participants agreed that the Federal government must recognize the many negative consequences of creating short-term, narrowly-targeted program initiatives. They urged Federal officials to consider the creation of policies that consolidate rather than fragment the myriad program initiatives now in existence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services should develop common definitions, complementary data elements and reporting forms, and model performance standards for all adult education and literacy program initiatives.
- The Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services should consider the use of financial incentives to promote coordination and integration of services at the State and local levels.
- The Federal government should consider consolidating all adult education and literacy initiatives into a single comprehensive initiative.

THEME #2: PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

According to most participants, the development of common performance standards is an essential step in providing a more effective adult education delivery system. For many, the current system is too preoccupied with enrollment figures and expansion of the delivery system and not concerned enough about quality. Several participants noted that past evaluation efforts have focused more on process evaluation (inputs) than on product evaluation (outputs).

Although most agreed that a national "yardstick" to measure program effectiveness is important, there was little agreement on what that "yardstick" should look like or how to go about creating it. For many, the first step would be an investment in research to identify appropriate performance standards and the methods by which to measure them. Those participants recommended that the Federal government provide the leadership and financial resources necessary to accom-

Roy Blunt, Missouri Secretary of State, testified at the St. Louis hearing, as Drew Roy, with Southwestern Bell Telephone, listens intently.

plish this task. Others suggested that the first step must be to create a common definition of literacy. This would establish a national goal or standard against which progress could be measured. For still others, the first step would be the creation of a common data collection and reporting system that can generate and report data across all adult education and literacy-related programs.

Many practitioners noted that all stakeholders in the adult education delivery system—students, teachers and administrators—must be involved in developing appropriate performance standards. Participants felt that although strong Federal leadership is important, the responsibility for identifying performance standards and the tools to measure them must be jointly shared by all stakeholders in the system.

Most participants felt strongly that the accountability system must be driven by the individual learner's goals, and programs evaluated on how well those goals are being met. One of the major issues discussed by participants centered around the use of standardized tests to measure both individual and program performance. Several participants noted that standardized tests are often difficult and time-consuming to administer. Some questioned their appropriateness with non-readers and low-level adult basic education students, while others believed that standardized tests have very little relationship to individual student goals. According to Noreen Lopez, State Director of Adult Education in Illinois:

> ***"Current legislation requires the use of standardized tests as one measure of accountability. Yet few practitioners would agree that any appropriate instrument exists to report on student progress as related to their goals. More appropriate instruments and measures must be identified and tested."***

Because of concerns about the appropriateness and usefulness of current tests, participants recommended that the Department of Education invest in research to identify and/or develop appropriate tests and assessment instruments that take into account the unique characteristics and skill levels of adult students. Although

most participants agreed that tests can be valuable measurement tools, very few believed that tests should be the only measurement of student progress. William T. McLain, President of the Delaware Association for Adult and Community Education, spoke to this point:

> ***"The Department of Education stresses reaching the 'hardest-to-reach' under the Adult Education Act. Indicators of participant progress must be used that are not counterproductive in serving these clients. Adult assessment should be keyed to progress toward the student's goals and to demonstrate competencies attained. Comparison to other criteria such as school grade equivalent is not desirable. In short, non-traditional programs need non-traditional assessment for student progress."***

The need to use a variety of assessment strategies was supported by most practitioners. Although all agreed that measurement of academic skill gain is an essential element of accountability, many suggested that there are other important elements as well. Fran Tracy-Mumford, Supervisor of Adult and Community Education in Delaware, identified a number of these elements:

> ***"Outcomes should address positive life and skill changes such as: economic gains, basic skill growth, improved ability to speak English, increased participation as citizens, increased family benefits and increased personal growth in self-esteem and confidence."***

Practitioners also identified a number of process or input-based "quality indicators" that could be used as evaluation measures. For example, based on the premise that adults "vote with their feet," attendance and retention are indicators of how well students' needs are being met and, as such, are good evaluation measures.

Many agreed that the following program elements are most often associated with quality programs and should be included in any evaluation process used to determine program effectiveness:

- Full-time staff;
- Individualized instructional programs;
- Computer-assisted instruction;

- A full array of support services (counseling, child-care, transportation, etc.); and
- Strong staff training programs.

For most participants, the critical issue was the need to use a variety of assessment approaches. Not any one accountability measure is appropriate in all situations and for all adult students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department of Education should invest in research to identify and/or develop appropriate tests and student assessment instruments.
- The Department of Education should create a national panel on program assessment to establish performance standards.
- All stakeholders, including practitioners and students, must be directly involved in the process to develop appropriate performance standards.
- Program effectiveness measures must be centered around the individual learner's goals and how well the program meets those goals.

THEME #3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many participants expressed the strong belief that a successful delivery system must be built upon a cadre of full-time, professionally trained adult education teachers. These participants viewed the current temporary part-time status of adult education teachers as a major barrier to the ultimate success of the adult education and literacy delivery system.

Although some adult education teachers are full-time employees, most are not. The majority remain temporary, part-time employees without the full-time contracts, job stability, benefits, and professional development opportunities afforded other professional educators. Garland Hankins, Deputy Director of Vocational and Technical Education for the Arkansas Department of Education, described the importance of full-time staff in this way:

"The ability to rely on persons who are designated solely for adult education activity strengthens the base from which services are delivered. The use of certified personnel guarantees that trained professionals are responsible for the delivery of instruction."

According to William S. Griffith, President, American Association of Adult and Continuing Education:

"In the United States elementary, secondary and post-secondary education is seen to be so essential to the national welfare that full-time career positions have been established to ensure that an adequate cadre of appropriately prepared personnel are on duty to deliver educational services that are in the national interest. Only adult education, and especially adult basic education, is operated to a disheartening degree on the contributed efforts of volunteers and part-time personnel who have little hope of ever attaining a secure, regular, adequately remunerated position in their preferred area of work...I know of no more significant limitation on the effectiveness of adult basic education programs in the United States than the reluctance of Federal and State leadership to provide the career positions that are essential to the preparation and employment of well prepared personnel."

In addition to creating full-time positions, participants also identified the need to improve and expand the education and training opportunities afforded adult education teachers.

Several participants reported that many of the current staff development and training efforts have only marginal impact because many of the teachers who receive training soon leave the program. Some noted that because part-time teachers usually do not get leave time or compensation for professional development and because many have other full or

John Spates, a student at the IBM Adult Learning Center in St. Louis, described to Federal officials his reasons for seeking additional basic education. To his left is tutor Frank Babka.

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part-time jobs, training is often reduced to the lowest common denominator in order to attract the part-time teacher. Time—not quality—is too often the driving force behind many training efforts.

Many participants noted that the "quick-fix" workshop must be replaced with on-going education and training opportunities. State-wide education and training networks need to be created. These training entities need to be staffed with full-time trainers and equipped with the resources (financial and material) to meet the needs of teachers.

Some professionals in the field, like Vicki Effird, ABLE Center manager/instructor for Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC, reported very little, if any, staff training for teachers:

> ***"We need a State-wide staff development program. There is little or no staff development for ABE instructors. A bachelor's degree is the only requirement (for hiring), although now we are asking that they have had some experience with adults. There are no full-time instructors in North Carolina in ABE, and we cannot pay part-timers to come to staff development."***

Participants made two specific recommendations on how to meet this particular challenge. The first they agreed, is to secure a significant increase in funding to establish full-time teaching positions. The second, to create a funding system that will provide the stability necessary to sustain, over time, large numbers of full-time staff, rather than the current practice of "project funding" where staff are hired on a short-term basis.

Others suggested that financial incentives need to be provided colleges and universities to involve them in substantive and ongoing research in adult education. To date, investments in adult education research and development have been minimal.

Some participants recommended that undergraduate and graduate programs be developed that recruit and prepare the "best and brightest" for careers in adult education. According to Annette Greenland, Assistant Professor of Adult Education, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte:

> ***"...some observers may see it as contrary to the long-prevalent stereotype that 'any adult can teach another adult,' but a strong case for comprehensive preparation can be built upon such factors as (a) the great diversity within the huge population we call 'functionally illiterate adults'; (b) evidence that child/youth education wasn't successful for much of this cohort; and (c) the difficulty***

of nurturing the multiple contexts in which the prospective learner moves and the daily risks he/she faces."

The need to provide appropriate training and support for the many volunteer tutors providing instruction to adults was expressed by many. According to participants, the volunteer—who often serves the lowest level adult learner—has less professional training than any other kind of education instructor. Stated Dr. Eunice N. Askov, Professor of Education and Director of the Institute for Adult Literacy, the Pennsylvania State University:

"Unfortunately, volunteers, who have the least amount of professional preparation, often serve the least able learners who have multiple handicaps or barriers to learning. The volunteer tutor's limited training, usually using prescribed materials, is often inappropriate for these adult learners who have already failed in the public schools as children. Now, given a second chance to learn to read, they fail again primarily because instruction is not designed to meet their needs and because the tutor, although well intentioned, lacks the knowledge and experience to help the individual."

Participants recommended that education and training for volunteer tutors be substantially strengthened, with the volunteer training network integrated into professional staff training programs. Several participants suggested that the Federal government should begin to place greater emphasis on adequate education and training for volunteer tutors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department of Education should address, through funding policy, the need to create full-time career positions in adult education and literacy.
- The Department of Education should provide the financial resources and technical assistance required to establish and maintain quality staff development and training for both teachers and volunteer tutors at the State and local levels.

◈ THEME #4: A DIVERSE PROVIDER NETWORK

There has been a proliferation of adult education and literacy providers over the past decade. The current provider network includes not only local education agencies and community colleges but community-based organizations, libraries, businesses, unions, correctional centers and jails and volunteer organizations. This diverse provider network has allowed greater access to previously unserved and underserved adult populations.

A number of participants spoke about the importance of supporting a diverse network of adult education service providers. Participants Camille Monzon, Director of the Seattle Indian Center, a community-based organization, and Christine Cassidy, Executive Director of Washington Literacy, a private nonprofit organization which supports volunteer-based literacy services, pointed out that non-traditional providers are often uniquely qualified to serve many educationally and economically disadvantaged adults.

Many adults with a history of school failure are reluctant to re-enter educational institutions. Alternate service providers serve as a community link to many of these disenfranchised adults. David Rosen, representing the Massachusetts Committee on Adult Education, talked about the importance of a diversity of service providers:

> ***"In Massachusetts we have found that we have a better adult education services system when we have a diversity of service providers. Not all local education agencies and corrections institutions, but community-based organizations, community colleges, libraries, companies and unions, and volunteer organizations make up our provider network. With this diversity we have been able to reach learners who have the greatest needs, those who only come for help if literacy services are close to home, close to work, or are provided by organizations that they trust."***

Representatives from State libraries indicated a willingness to become full and active partners in the adult education and literacy effort and suggested that the network of public libraries has much to offer the adult education delivery system. According to Nancy Zussy, State Librarian, Washington State:

> ***"Libraries have an integral role to play in reaching those not served, especially those people who are not yet able to function in a classroom. Libraries can be a catalyst in the community for coordinating literacy activities, providing collections in support of literacy programs,***

and providing space for tutoring—if the librarians are adequately trained and knowledgeable about literacy. Rather than duplicate school and community college programs, libraries have traditionally worked with community-based groups and councils to address the needs of the beginning level reader, from beginning to approximately fifth grade reading level."

Patricia Gaul, Executive Director of the Delaware County Literacy Council of Chester, PA, was one of several participants who indicated that the volunteer literacy program is also a strong part of the adult education and literacy delivery system:

"Volunteer literacy must be enabled to take its full place in a comprehensive system of complementary adult basic education and literacy providers....For more than twenty- five years the volunteer literacy movement has been developing a wide range of instructional strategies and a tutor support system that assures quality services designed to meet the individual needs of undereducated adults."

Many agreed that the adult education and literacy delivery system is strengthened by this diversity of providers. However, many of these alternate provider networks are in jeopardy because of a lack of funding. Recruitment, training, acquisition of materials, and supervision are all program elements that require significant financial support. These participants felt strongly that it is the responsibility of the Department of Education to ensure that Federal adult education funds support this broad network of alternate service providers.

RECOMMENDATION

- The Department of Education must actively support the involvement of a diverse network of service providers in the planning and delivery of adult education and literacy services.

THEME #5: FUNDING

The most frequently mentioned topic at each of the hearings and, according to many participants, the most difficult challenge facing the adult education delivery system, is the need for additional funding. Although participants noted that expenditures for adult education and literacy have risen significantly (Federal, State, and local expenditures increased from $174 million in FY 1980 to over $595 million in FY 1988), a staggering discrepancy remains between available resources and need.

Participants noted that between 5 and 10 percent (three million adults) of the adult population in need of basic skills and literacy services is currently being served by the delivery system. In many instances, the system can only minimally address the needs of students. According to W.D. Leip, ABE Director and President of the Missouri Adult Basic Education Administrators Association:

> ***"...the hard reality is that we haven't scratched the surface of the problem, and if we really must become a nation of readers in order to compete in the world economy, then we had better get serious about creating a program capable of getting the job done. It won't be cheap, but it will be less expensive than not doing it. We will need all the money we can lay our hands on to teach the unemployed how to read well enough to become employed."***

In addition to the funds required to expand services to the many millions of adults needing assistance, a number of participants identified the need to strengthen the system's infrastructure. They felt that a significant increase in funding is needed for instructional staff, administrative support, training programs, materials, and support services if program quality is to established and maintained. According to the Honorable Dale E. Wolf, Lt. Governor, State of Delaware:

> ***"We encourage an increase in funding allocations to States to enable adult instructional programs to offer sufficient learning opportunities to meet the needs of the population who are educationally disadvantaged. Adequate funding will enable States to provide comprehensive programs and form the necessary infrastructure with full-time professional staff to educate this adult population."***

K. Duane Rankin, representing the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association, Inc., made the following recommendation:

> ***"...that the Federal government encourage each State's governor to immediately take a strong leadership role to ensure that fiscal capacity to fund these services is available. Much attention is currently being directed to issues of inequity and inadequacy in funding educational services for youth, and the Illinois Adult and Continuing Education Association believes that there is an even greater inadequacy and inequity in funding for adult education which must also be addressed and resolved simultaneously as Illinois and our nation move rapidly toward the 21st Century."***

Jimmy Smith, Director of Adult Education for South Carolina, in a lighter moment as he testified at the Charleston hearing.

In addition to increasing the amount of funding for adult education and literacy, a number of practitioners believe that more flexibility in the current funding regulations governing the Federal adult education program would improve the States' ability to provide services. Many practitioners believe that the various "set-asides" reduce the States' flexibility to provide appropriate services to relevant populations. According to Noreen Lopez, State Director in Illinois:

> ***"We do not need new programs or set-asides to serve the homeless, limited English proficient, or to provide workplace literacy or family literacy. All these populations and programs can be identified in the Federal legislation, with States then planning services***

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for the most appropriate populations and programs locally. What is needed is adequate resources to provide all appropriate services."

Jane Kost, a local adult education director from Jefferson College in Hillsboro, MO, offered this perspective:

"Set-aside funding reduces the effectiveness of the local ABE program. ABE is perhaps the last government program which does not have to serve a specific population (eligible by income, institutionalized, etc.), but educational set-asides for the institutionalized, the homeless, etc., are eating into general revenue funds. Of course these special populations should be served, but the State and local ABE service providers can determine the percentages to be served. Local program populations vary considerably. If it's not broken, don't fix it—ABE has always offered its services to all populations.

A number of practitioners viewed the 5 percent "cap" on administrative expenditures as too restrictive. Many argued that the administrative responsibilities of managing programs at both the State and local levels have increased dramatically over the last few years, especially in data collection, reporting and coordination activities, but that the administrative support has decreased. Since many States rely on Federal funds for administrative support, the 5 percent "cap" does not allow sufficient support for the administrative costs associated with managing an adult education program. A number of participants reported that the 5 percent "cap" has also had a "chilling effect" on the involvement of many community-based and nonprofit organizations.

Many practitioners felt the current maintenance of effort requirements (a requirement that State and local expenditures in support of adult education programs must be maintained or increased each year) were overly punitive, especially in instances where the State match is many times greater than the Federal share. Participants recommended that the Division of Adult Education and Literacy consider revisions to the Adult Education Act that will broaden the State's use of program funds. Many participants suggested that the States should have more responsibility in determining how the Federal funds are spent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department of Education should take a leadership role in leveraging the funds necessary to provide comprehensive services to the eligible adult population.
- The Department of Education should seek appropriate legislative remedies to (1) remove the 5 percent "cap" on administrative costs; (2) create more flexibility in the maintenance of effort requirement; and (3) allow the states to identify the appropriate populations to be served (eliminate the use of set-asides).

THEME #6: SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

For some who testified, increasing the capacity of the delivery system means improving the system's ability to serve the many special needs adults requiring adult education and literacy services. Special needs populations discussed during the course of the hearings include the non-English speaking immigrant, the homeless, the hearing-impaired, the elderly, the mentally handicapped, the incarcerated, and adults with learning disabilities.

Laurel Brady Maglione, Director, Office of Special Services, Ramapo College of New Jersey, spoke for many of the special needs populations when she described the importance of adult education in the lives of learning-disabled adults:

> ***"It is only through the adult education delivery system that services to learning-disabled adults may be offered in an organized and consistent fashion to all who are in need. Continuing education is a necessity in order to assist adults with learning disabilities in becoming independent, self-sufficient, productive and autonomous individuals."***

It was emphasized that each of these special needs adults brings a unique set of needs, abilities, experiences, and values to the adult education program. The one common bond is the need to improve their individual knowledge and skills. For these adults to reach their educational goals, the adult education practitioner must be able to respond to the unique needs of each individual.

Three specific concerns were expressed. First, the system lacks an adequate intake and assessment process. A proper diagnosis of learning, behavioral and/or physical barriers is critical to the success of these adults. Enrico A. Prata, Director of Adult Education in Caldwell/West Caldwell, NJ, spoke to this issue:

> ***"The intake and assessment process must take into consideration the individual needs, the potential handicapping circumstances, cultural and language barriers, and other factors that may influence the participation and success of the client."***

Ester Salas, an ESL student at Bronx Educational Services, and her instructor, Jose Sanchez, testified at the Newark hearing.

Secondly, individualized student goals must be developed collaboratively by the practitioner and the adult learner. Participants agreed that an individualized education plan designed around the needs and abilities of each student greatly increases that student's chances for success.

The third concern was related to the availability of appropriate support services and the many barriers to participation for special needs adults. Participants indicated that it is critical that the adult education program have the resources to remove those barriers. James Aldrich, Executive Director, International Institute of Boston, described the broad range of needs of the Non-English speaking immigrant:

> ***"An adult, in particular one who cannot negotiate in English, may face a variety of problems such as access and understanding of the health care system, underemployment, post-resettlement trauma, and understanding of legal rights and responsibilities. The adult learner is a whole person whose life needs can become part of the educational process. It must be recognized that there are other problems that become barriers to participation, retention, and successful completion. They must be addressed within the adult education program."***

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Each of these elements must be in place if the special needs adult is to be fully and successfully integrated into the adult education and literacy delivery system. Participants noted that the greatest barrier to providing appropriate services to these population groups is the lack of funding for specialized staff training and support services. According to Roderick M. Gallagher, General Manager of Skills Inc., a workshop for the handicapped in Seattle:

> ***"These folks have a deficiency...that is what the handicap or disability is. To overcome a deficiency, something extra has to be done."***

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department of Education should focus the necessary resources to improve the training of staff to recognize and effectively teach special needs adults.
- The Department of Education should take a leadership role in identifying ways in which programs can access and utilize funds from a variety of Federal agencies to serve special needs populations.

CONCLUSION

The unique characteristics of the adult education delivery system—its diversity that offers choice to those it serves; its flexibility in adapting services to a broad range of populations in a wide variety of settings; and its commitment to expanding its capacity through coordination and its quality through program improvement—are both challenges and strengths.

The commitment to the mission of adult education of those who testified at the public hearings and participated in meetings with Federal staff was clearly evident. Administrators, teachers, volunteers and advocates from all sectors provided informed and thoughtful assessments on the issues in adult education that must be addressed; the weaknesses and strengths of the system; and recommendations that will guide the Department of Education and other Federal agencies as they refine strategies and action plans to move toward the National Goal for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.

The Federal sector shares the commitment reflected in the hearing testimony. Federal officials will use the knowledge gained and recommendations made to guide them in the development of policy and performance standards. Their response to the Forums will be in keeping with the spirit of the request so eloquently voiced by William N. Sperling, Director of ABLE-Net in Seattle, WA:

> ***"All of the tools to create a responsive adult literacy and basic skills system are available right now. We ask for the guidance of those who know the most critical needs of our citizens in insuring that our services meet the needs of both our students and society. As educators we expect to be given the responsibility to develop curriculum and instruction that is responsive to those needs...So go back to the nation's capital and examine the leadership you are giving at that level. Insure that it reflects the collaborative approach that will be required. Insure that it addresses the needs of the nation and our participants and insure that results reach us at the State and local level. I assure you we will be doing our part down here."***

APPENDIX A

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Washington State Library, AJ-11
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APPENDIX B

TESTIFIERS BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED

Category	Seattle	St. Louis	Charleston	Newark	Total
State Govt.					
Governor's Off.	1	-	1	-	2
Lt. Gov.	-	-	-	1	1
Sec. of State	-	1	1	-	1
Dept. Educ.	8	5	2	3	18
Dept. Employ. and Training	1	1	-	3	5
Dept. Human Services	2	2	1	3	8
Dept. Correct.	1	1	1	1	4
State Libr.	1	-	1	-	2
State Litr. Coun. Coalition	1	2	1	4	8
St. Boards/ Commissions	-	1	-	1	2
County/City Govt.					
County Depts.	-	-	1	1	1
Mayor's Off.	-	-	-	1	1
City Depts.	-	-	-	2	2
Providers					
Lea's	-	8	5	8	21
Comm. Col./Univ.	5	11	-	3	19
Comm.-Based Org.	2	-	-	-	2
Non-Profit Agen.	1	1	-	5	7
Ser. Del. Areas/ Pri. Ind. Counc.	2	1	-	3	6
Literacy Network	1	3	-	8	12
Teachers	1	1	2	2	6
Tutors	1	1	-	-	2
Students	2	-	7	4	13
Pro. Assoc.	2	4	-	2	8
College/Univ.	-	2	1	-	3
Business	-	1	3	3	7
Org. Labor	1	1	-	2	4
Comm.Agencies	-	1	1	-	2
Sp. Interest	4	1	-	4	9
Others	1	2	-	1	4
Totals	38	51	28	63	180

APPENDIX C

FEDERAL HEARING OFFICIALS

SEATTLE, WA
January 29, 1991

Barry Stern
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
(OVAE)
U.S. Department of Education

Joan Seamon
Director
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
OVAE
U.S. Department of Education

Roberta May
Secretary's Regional Representative
Region X
U.S. Department of Education

Barry Morrisroe
Program Manager
Family Support Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

G. Edward Leslie
Acting Regional Administrator - Region X
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor

ST. LOUIS, MO
February 2, 1991

Barry Stern
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
(OVAE)
U.S. Department of Education

Joan Seamon
Director
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Ray Uhalde
Administrator, Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor

Robert Wilson
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Family Support Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Andrew Rock
Policy Analyst
Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

CHARLESTON, SC
February 12, 1991

John MacDonald
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Joan Seamon
Director
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
OVAE
U.S. Department of Education

Ray Uhalde
Administrator, Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development
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John Will
Secretary's Regional Representative
Region IV
U.S. Department of Education

NEWARK, NJ
February 20, 1991

John MacDonald
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Joan Seamon
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Division of Adult Education and Literacy
OVAE
U.S. Department of Education

D. Kay Wright
Secretary's Regional Representative
Region III
U.S. Department of Education

Herb Stupp
Secretary's Regional Representative (Acting)
Region II
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Roberts Jones
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Robert Wilson
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Andrew Rock
Policy Analyst
Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

APPENDIX D

FEDERAL LITERACY INITIATIVES

AMERICA 2000: AN EDUCATION STRATEGY

On April 18 President Bush and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander announced a bold and comprehensive plan for revitalization of American education. Entitled An Education Strategy-range plan to move every community in the Nation toward the National Education Goals set by the President and the Governors in 1990.

America 2000 builds on four related themes:

- **Creating better and more accountable schools** for today's students;
- **Creating a new generation of American schools** for tomorrow's students;
- Transforming America into **a nation of students**; and
- **Making our communities places where learning will happen**.

It is part three — creating a "nation of students" — that is most pertinent to adult educators. To create a "nation of students," the plan recommends the following:

- **Job-related skill standards** built around core proficiencies that will guide adult learning programs in curricula development and individual goal-setting. The Secretaries of Education and Labor will spearhead a public-private partnership to develop these voluntary standards.
- **Skill Clinics** with one-stop assessment and referral in every large community and work-site so that adults can learn how their skills compare with those they want to have and where they can acquire the skills and knowledge they still need.
- **Performance standards** for all Federally-assisted adult education and literacy programs.
- **A National Conference on Education** for Adult Americans, as part of an effort to improve the quality and accessibility of education programs that serve adults.
- **Federal leadership by example**, with Federal agencies embarking on a government-wide program of skill upgrading for all employees.

For further information: AMERICA 2000 has a national hotline (1-800-USA-LEARN), or in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, 202/401-2000. More detailed information on a "nation of students" is available from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy Clearinghouse, 202/732-2396.

INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The new Institute for Literacy Research and Practice was authorized under the 1988 amendments to the Adult Education Act (Section 384). The Institute will coordinate and provide direct funding support for literacy activities in four major areas:

- Research and development;
- Training and technical assistance;
- Program identification, evaluation and validation; and
- Clearinghouse activities.

For FY 1991, the sum of $4.8 million has been appropriated for the Institute, which will be housed in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. A steering committee composed of administrators from nine program offices in the U.S. Department of Education and two representatives from the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services has been developing a tentative agenda for the Institute's first year of operation. A Director and National Advisory Committee will be named in August 1991, with the Institute scheduled to begin formal operations shortly thereafter.

For further information contact Joan Seamon, Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-7240, Telephone 202/732-2270.

APPENDIX E

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U.S. Department of Education

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Adult Education Act
Silver Anniversary
1966-1991

Toward A Literate America

ED/OVAE91-5

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